

My name is Melissa Beckman. I have been a CNA for 12 years. Currently I am also a restorative assistant at Eagle Cliff Manor in Billings. A Restorative nursing assistant helps maintain quality of life for residents through ambulation programs and exercises to maintain range of motion and usefulness of their extremities.

During my experience as a CNA I have provided cares for people with a variety of different medical conditions. They have varied in ages from young adults to the elderly. The work of a CNA can be very difficult. It is a job that is both physically and mentally challenging.

CNA's are responsible for many duties to help ensure that each resident is provided with quality cares and help create a safe and happy environment for the residents' home. Some of the duties include helping residents perform activities of daily living with hygiene that consist of bathing, dressing, transfers, ambulation, and assisting the resident during meals.

These are the basic duties of a CNA, but the roles that a CNA acquire can have even more meaning for the residents. Besides being care providers, we can be listeners, motivators, supporters, and a friend for the resident. It is important for the residents that a CNA comes to work with a positive attitude and is ready to provide the type of care that each resident deserves.

During a CNA's shift they are usually on the move answering call lights, toileting residents, and assisting with transfers making sure each residents feel comfortable. Depending on the mental and physical status of the resident the

degree of assistance a CNA provides to each resident can range from a simple stand-by assist, to a moderate or even a total assist.

Working as a CNA is a fast paced job providing direct cares to multiple people during the day and is very physically demanding.

CNA's also encounter mental hardships with their jobs while providing cares for the residents. Many of the residents that now have a nursing facility as their home have made life-changing adjustments and sacrifices. The reason for these changes may be due to the resident's own physical limitations, injury, or other medical conditions that have caused a decline or loss in their mobility.

As a CNA it is important to be attentive to the physical aspects of a resident such as hydration, skin condition, or physical pain, but it is also very important to watch for emotional and behavioral changes. CNA's must be caring, kind, understanding, and compassionate to each individual resident and their current situations.

CNA's must listen to the residents and experience the joys and smiles on the resident's good days, but they must also be encouraging and supportive for the resident on their bad days. At times CNA's must find ways to comfort family members during times of grief when their loved one is passing away and comfort a dying resident.

Many CNA's struggle with finances to keep up with the demands of a higher cost of living such as child care costs, health care, and unexpected expenses that might occur in life. I have seen co-workers work longer hours or

take an additional part-time job to help their financial responsibilities. In some cases this affects the quality of time spent with their own families. They may be unable to take adequate vacations because they cannot afford time off from work or afford vacation costs. Other hobbies may also be neglected.

Eventually, the financial stresses and fatigue can cause a person to be burned out. The quality of care for the residents can be affected if a CNA does not have a positive attitude or cannot fully devote themselves to meet all of the resident's needs. The CNA may feel overwhelmed or stressed due to financial burdens. I feel the work that a CNA does is very important and much needed for the residents, the families, and the nursing facility.

I enjoy being a part of the resident's lives and am very dedicated to helping improve and maintain their lives. This is also the way many other CNA's feel about their job, but the financial hardships still exist. Past wage increases have benefited CNA's including myself, helping keep the bills paid. At times it can still be a struggle, making issues like healthcare and retirement plans difficult to afford. A wage increase would be a benefit for all CNA's. It would also help relieve some of the financial burdens to keep up with the cost of living and help people better plan for the future for themselves and their families.

Thank you for taking the time to listen today.